

Informant: Mrs. Traxler

Address: Lincoln Ave, Evanston

Age: About 60

Location: Staff Room, Northwestern Library

(Introductory statements made)

1Q) So you were born in Wilmette, or Evanston?

A) In Wilmette, in a house that had been moved from Evanston. On Sheridan Road.

(At this point she took a piece of paper upon which I had jotted down a few questions and began to answer some of them).

2Q) (On paper) What was the fare?

A) They changed the price a number of times. There were tokens and they changed the price and shape.

3Q) (on paper) How many cars did the trolleys have?

A) Just one car.

4Q) (On paper) ,What was the length of the trip?

A) The length of the trip was the same as the buses.

Q) Well, what I had in mind was the time a trip took.

A) Oh, just the same as the buses.

(She also pointed to several questions on the paper and indicated that she did not know the answers).

5Q) How long did you live in Wilmette?

A) Oh, until I got married.

6Q) Then you moved to Evanston?

A) Yes, I married an Evanstonian.

7Q) So you lived in Evanston when the Trolley's were running?

A) Yes.

8Q) Well, how often did you use the trolleys. Did you use it for business, shopping, or what?

A) Oh, I walked mostly to Davis Street. No, I really didn't use the trolley much. I like to walk. Of course when I want to Howard Street I used the cars.

(Pause)

I don't remember the fare. But I think that at one time

you could get three tokens for a quarter.

9Q) So, you didn't use it much?

A) No, I like to walk. I went to New Trier and the whole gang of us would walk three or four miles to school. It was almost as far to walk to the North Shore. That went to Waukeegan.

10Q) Earlier you mentioned the Dinky. Can you tell me about it?

A) Oh, I don't remember much. Just that it went way over. It went to Harms Woods, that I know. But I can't remember. She (Mrs Lasher) could tell you more about that.

11Q) The trolleys, where did they stop? At every corner? Right where people just raised up their hands?

A) Oh yes, it stopped at every corner, just like the bus.

12Q) And how did you get it to stop; just pull a cord and a bell would ring?

A) Yes, you pulled a cord, just like the buses.

Q) Was it a bell or a buzzer?

A) It was just like the buses.

13Q) How did you like the service?

A) It was good. They ran often, more often than the buses. I don't think that there was a schedual.

14Q) Did they put more cars on at Rush Hour?

A) I don't remember about that.

15Q) Do you remember if they had any type of summer cars, you know, open cars?

A) No, I don't remember any. This sounds like San Francisco. (Some periferal talk on this subject)

16Q) Did your husband work in Evanston?

A) No, he is a lawyer down in Chicago. He was a partner to Congressman Church. (More talk on this).

Q) So he didn't use the trolleys much.

17Q) How did your husband get to work in Chicago? The CTA?

A) Oh no. The Northwestern. I used to take that, too, when

I worked before I was married. I was a chemist in Chicago.

18Q) Do you know if there were any accidents on the line, such as derailments and such?

A) I never heard of any. The cars ran well, like the ones in Chicago. They had them running down State Street. They still had them until... I'm not sure. The terminal is in the same place where the buses go now, on Central Street, or where its for sale now. The reason they went out of business is because they didn't have locked boxes.

Q) Was there a lot of stealing?

A) I'm not sure, but they made change and took fares in those open boxes, and they went broke.

Q) Is this the Bus Company you are talking about?

A) Yes. Now the street cars had boxes. You just put the change in just like the buses now.

Q) Was it exact fare?

A) Yes, or tokens. They had a little 'E' on them.

Q) Where did you buy tokens?

A) Right there on the trolley. They were cheaper than the regular fare so people bought a lot.

19Q) Was there a children's fare, for example under 12?

A) Yes, there was a special fare for children that was cheaper.

20Q) When the car line ended, out at Crawford on Central, how did the cars turn around?

A) You know where that hot dog stand is now? Well the cars turned right around it. That's why there is a little island there.

Q) Did it just swing around?

A) No there was a circle of track around it.

21Q) When the trolley reached the turnaround, did every body have to get off and pay new fares, or could you stay on?

A) I don't know. Of course everybody has to get off at the end of the line. Maybe they all paid again, but I don't know. I don't know what the buses do. I never take them that far west. When I was first married, I lived on Sherman between Noyes and Colfax and I always walked to Davis.

22Q) Can you tell me about the crew? Were there just the motorman and conductor?

A) No, just one man. He took the fare and opened the door. He made change and sold tokens. Now the trains always had two men, just like the Chicago and Northwestern, or the North Shore.

Q) The North Shore ran right over here on the Elevated tracks?

A) There were the North Shore tracks.

Q) But were they the ones the Elevated uses now?

A) Yes, it went all the way from Waukeegan to Chicago. It was a very nice outfit. It ran along Greenleaf Avenue in Wilmette. It was nicer than the El or the trolleys.
(Periferal conversation)

My father went to school in Evanston, where the North Shore Hotel is. He used to talk about old Evanston. He went to what was called 'The Academy'. My husband did as well. They didn't have any high schools up in Wisconsin so my father came to Evanston to attend Northwestern Academy. Then he went to liberal arts at Northwestern and graduated in 1880. Then to Northwestern Law. He was a lawyer too.

23Q) Did your father ever talk about the piers?

A) Oh, yes.

Q) Did he work on them?

A) No, No. He shipped out on a schooner to make extra money during the Summer vacation. He shipped off the Davis Street Pier. There weren't many ways to make money in those days and that's how he did it. He didn't want to go home to Wisconsin.

End.

Laurence D. Schiller

